

Ear resection in (lop) rabbits

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Warning: this file contains pictures that may be distressing for people.

Rabbits can suffer from chronic ear infection. Lop-rabbits are particularly predisposed to chronic ear infection, due to the conformation of the ear canal and the lop

ear that prevents a good aeration. This leads to recurrent and chronic ear infection.



Arie van Praag

French lop-rabbit

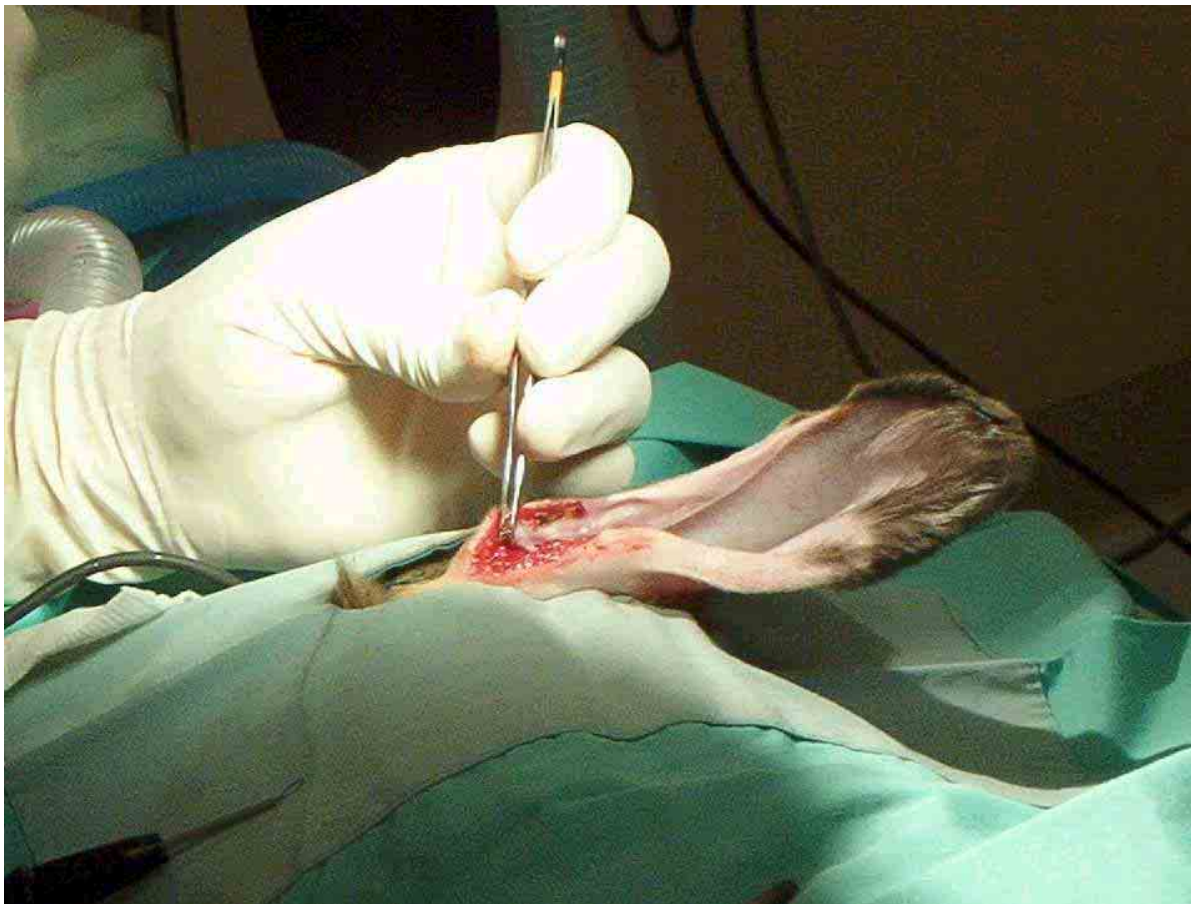
Various initial treatments are often attempted, but their failure leads to the accumulation of pus, and the occlusion of the in the ear canal. This prevents

topical ear medication to come in contact with the infectious organisms and kill them. The result is that the infection cannot be properly treated and becomes worse, or:

- it is treated, but shows relapse after a few months
- it has led to developmental changes in the ear, like ulceration or the growth of a tumor or a polyp.

Horizontal ear resection surgery, also called "Zepp procedure", can be attempted if no modifications are observed in the horizontal ear canal. The aim of this surgery is to shorten the length of the ear canal, in order to facilitate aeration, drainage, and to enable the medication to reach the infectious site. The modification of temperature and the decrease of internal humidity will lead to a decrease of bacterial infection.





Kim Chilson

Ear resection surgery, performed by Dr. B. Langhofer



Surgical procedure and post-surgical care

The surgical procedure will reconstruct the entry of the ear canal by removing a small portion of skin, cartilage, and ear canal, and a new "entry" is reconstructed in order to expose the horizontal canal.



The administration of antibiotics and analgesics is necessary after the surgical procedure. The later will reduce pain, known to slow down the activity of the digestive tract, delay food intake and recovery in rabbits.

The site of surgery may get bloody crusts

and be covered with ear discharge. It is recommended not to take them away, till the sutures are removed.

It usually takes another few months before the ear infection is completely cleared.

Acknowledgement

Thanks are due to Kim Chilson (USA) and to Dr B. Langhofer (FIRST Regional Animal Hospital, Chandler, AZ – USA) for sharing the surgical technique of ear resection in rabbits, and for their permission to use the pictures of the surgical procedure.

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